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DD/ST#

7 AUG 1965

PRO-5

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Field Photo Interpretation  
Problems in Vietnam

1. This memorandum is for your information.

2. The attachment summarizes actions during the past six months related to problems of field photo readout

These actions were directed at weaknesses that have long been recognized and are caused primarily by the excessive workloads of photo interpreters in Saigon. Because of the workload PI's are unable to devote enough time to searching for new SA-2's and other new targets. A review by NPIC of North Vietnam photography has therefore been necessary to insure that important information has not been missed in the field readout. The review and final report is delayed a few days, of course, until the film reaches Washington.

3. The intelligence problem of identifying and locating SA 2's in North Vietnam was raised by Mr. McCone early this year when it became evident that SA-2's would be provided by the USSR. Actions were taken then to try to insure their early discovery, taking into account the limitations of the field PI capabilities.

4. Unfortunately these efforts did not prevent the subsequent losses. As noted in paragraph 6 of the attachment, General Carroll has now placed greater emphasis on this problem. One of the recommendations of the DIA-sponsored task force is to move a SAC mobile photo processing and interpretation unit to Saigon. We feel that this should have the effect of alleviating the pressures to a certain extent and we will be monitoring the results of it. The alternative to the SAC unit would be to recommend that a team of PI's from NPIC be sent to the area. DIA is aware that this could and would be done on request. It is my belief that the SAC unit should be sent; then, if further support is needed, an NPIC team should be provided.

DIA review(s) completed.

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NGA Review completed.

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5. The DDI will continue to monitor the quality and timeliness of field readout, noting in particular the effects of improvements initiated by the DOD. If it is apparent that these improvements will not solve the problems, we will make arrangements with DIA to have an NPIC team sent to Saigon.




PAUL A. BOREL

Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

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Attachment

DDI/CGS/Reconnaissance Group:  (3 Aug 65)

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Distribution:

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3 August 1965

Recent Actions Related to Problems of Field Photo Readout

1. In January this year, three members of CIA served on an NRO-sponsored Ad Hoc Committee on overseas film processing and reporting. In the deliberations of that committee, CIA emphasized to the DOD members the need to do something about the field readout weaknesses, particularly in South Vietnam. CIA was assured that field assets and capabilities were being augmented, and that stringent training and experience standards for field PI's were already in effect. For example, many of the Air Force personnel being sent to the field had already served at NPIC. The Ad Hoc Committee considered recommending that an NPIC team be established in the Far East to assist in the readout, but this was not acceptable to the DOD members. The Ad Hoc Committee did recommend that NPIC provide the field with PI and other assistance upon request as needed. (The report of that committee has been held up in USIB awaiting DIA's concurrence.)

2. On 12 April, a DDI memorandum to the DCI recommended that the DCI "convey to the Secretary of Defense the importance and immediacy of increasing the field capability for accurate and comprehensive initial readout of TROJAN HORSE photography."

3. On 14 April, the DDI advised the Director, NPIC of the DCI's concern over the introduction of SA-2's into North Vietnam and his desire that maximum attention be given to this problem in the review of photography.

4. On 14 April, a memorandum was sent to DIA asking that an unhurried search of photography be conducted routinely for SA-2's in North Vietnam by the field PI's. This resulted in a cable from DIA to the field on 16 April and a memorandum from DIA on 21 April detailing actions taken on this problem.

5. On 24 July, an NPIC memorandum on "TROJAN HORSE Exploitation" was provided the Acting DDI. It explained in detail what requirements NPIC is responding to and in what time frame. It also pointed out that NPIC had discovered five of the seven known SA-2's in North Vietnam, and the field only two.

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6. On 26 July, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Director, DIA called a meeting to discuss intelligence support for CINCPAC on the specific subject of SAM sites in North Vietnam. Representatives were there from the DDI, DDS&T and NPIC. Among the many courses of action under consideration as a result of that meeting is one to move a SAC mobile photo exploitation unit to Tan Son Nhut Airfield. The mobile unit is made up of 16 trailers carrying all necessary equipment, facilities and power generators. Personnel attached include nine photo interpreters which will provide a significant increase in the US PI strength in South Vietnam.

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